

The Constitution

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ATLANTA GA., JULY 7, 1881.

Taxpayers' Republicanism very happily call attention to a political fact when it says that "ex-stalwarts are becoming numerous."

Mr. Arthur should succeed to the presidency the democrats would have the satisfaction of knowing that they would have control of the senate, and that Mahone's vote would be powerful for evil.

The members of the Georgia legislature fresh from their districts yesterday gave expression to the feelings and sentiments of the people of the state in relation to the assassination. The resolutions were unanimously adopted, and were yesterday voted to the distinguished sufferer and his noble family.

There were 775 failures in the south in the first six months of this year, against 414 in the first half of 1880, and 641 in 1879. The liabilities of the failures of the past six months were \$306,105, against \$4,490,122 in the corresponding months of 1880. The second quarter of this year shows a falling off when compared with the first quarter, and the percentage of assets to liabilities has risen to 58.1. The business of the southern states is now considered sound and promising.

We noticed a few days ago that the Richmond Virginia college at Richmond, Virginia, had conferred upon Senator Brown the degree of LL.D. This is a distinguished compliment coming as it does from the Virginia college located at her capital, and the man who made such a gallant fight for the old position during the late senatorial deadlock. Georgia did her part nobly in that contest; and while the Richmond college has testified its appreciation by making Senator Brown a doctor of laws, if the people of Virginia had an opportunity to believe they would vote to elect Senator Hill president. We are glad our senators stand so well with the people of the old Dominion.

Should the Assassins Escape?

In the midst of the confusion which was the result of the attempt to take the president's life, the suggestion has been made in various quarters—by our northern exchanges principally—that hereafter it will be necessary to surround the executive head of the government with some of the safeguards that the crowned heads of the old world have deemed prudent and necessary. The suggestion is perhaps natural to the confusion of the moment, but it is utterly obnoxious to the American idea. It is a concession to the imperial notions of the age which the people of this country cannot afford to see made. It is to some extent an admission that the republicanism system is a failure, and this admission the people are not willing to make.

It is quite true that the law makes no adequate provision for the punishment of those who make attempts upon the life of the president. This omission is not due, as has been suggested, to the failure of the framers of the government to contemplate such a crime, but is the result of a desire to magnify the office of president as little as possible. It is probable that the fathers of the republic could not conceive of an attempt to take the life of a president freely chosen by the people, and it is certain that they never dreamed of a republicanism system a powerful political organization would engage in defamatory, bribery, perjury and all manner of corrupt practices in order to retain control of the offices of the country. The only remedy was as likely as any other, but doubtless there was suggested to the minds of our government and set in motion.

But if they had foreseen both, the probability is that they would have left the remedy to the wisdom and discretion of the generation most nearly concerned.

It is not necessary to surround the person of the president with the paraphernalia of a monarch in order to protect him against the assaults of political enemies and office-seekers. The law very properly makes no distinction between the person of the president and the person of the humblest citizen. This is true republicanism, and its simplicity would be marred by any statute which aimed to exalt the person of the president above those who have chosen him to do their will.

Should President Garfield die, the punishment of the murderer would be swift and sure, but should he recover, what penalty would the assassin be called on to pay? Under the law as it stands, he could be convicted of assault with intent to kill, but the penalty—a few years' imprisonment—is totally inadequate to the foul nature of the horrible attempt. It is not an ordinary crime, and ordinary punishment will not satisfy stern sense of justice which recognizes the nature and extent of the calamity which the assassin attempted to bring upon the country.

It has been the pleasure of THE CONSTITUTION on numerous occasions to hotly denounce extra-judicial measures in the punishment of crime, no matter what the nature of the crime. We have denounced, and we shall continue to denounce, every manifestation of that peculiar lawlessness which appeals to the court of Judge Lynch because these manifestations not only interfere with the operations of the law, but are barbarous and criminal in themselves. But here is a crime for which the law provides no adequate punishment. The crime of Booth was a bloody tableau projected upon a background of war and the tumultuous passions of war. It had its explanation in this; but here is a crime that can have no such explanation. It is the most utterly unjustifiable and unjustified attempt ever made in the history of assassination. The country is at peace, and the people of all sections and all parties are thoroughly satisfied with their president, when an assassin made bold by the attitude of a reckless faction of office-seekers, shoots him down in a public thoroughfare. The extra-

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